



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
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Record of a meeting of the **Special PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 6.00 pm on **Wednesday 15 January 2014**

PRESENT: Mr J T Dale (Chairman, in the Chair)
Mr M E Baines
Mr C J Cartwright
Mr W J Cross
Mr D C Hollis
Mr J Lammie
Mr M A Oxley
Mr D L Richardson
Mrs C L Vernon

OFFICERS	Mrs V Brambini	Director - Places (Development and Economy)
PRESENT:	Mr D Brown	Director – Places (Environment, Planning & Transport)
	Mr S Della Rocca	Assistant Director - Finance
	Miss M Gamston	Support Officer
	Mrs M Green	Accountant

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M D A Pocock Portfolio Holder for Highways, Waste and Recycling, Transport and Parking, Revenues and Benefits, Democratic Services

ALSO PRESENT: Miss G Waller

APOLOGIES: Mr T C King and Mr B A Montgomery

688 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in respect of the items on the agenda for this meeting.

689 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

690 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No Questions with Notice had been received from members.

SCRUTINY

691 BUDGET 2014-15, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Report No. 286/2013 from the Director for Resources was received.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Waste and Recycling, Transport and Parking, Revenues and Benefits, Democratic Services, Mr Pocock, introduced the report the purpose of which was to agree detailed budget proposals for 2014/15 for consultation and to inform Members of the estimated position on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2014.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- i) That the proposed 2014/15 budget for the Places Directorate was £11,091,000, the majority of which would cover contract payments;
- ii) That of the £425k of savings identified, the bulk are efficiency savings rather than cuts. The main saving was from the retendering of the highway maintenance contract;
- iii) That Pressures totalled approximately £60k including the closure of the castle resulting in a loss of income of £10k, this was expected to be recovered once refurbished;
- iv) That there was an additional late pressure of £37k for Waste Management. This was due in part to a small increase in the overall amount of waste produced. In addition the Authority was not able to negotiate a rate reduction for an extension to the disposal contract, as despite the recent small increase, the amount of household waste being produced is significantly less than the contractor had been anticipating;
- v) Members were advised that overall recycling rates for Rutland were approximately 60% and are expected to remain at that level for the foreseeable future. This was against a national target of 50%;
- vi) That savings had been made following changes to Home to School Transport routes;
- vii) That changes to Denominational Transport had been taken into account in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
- viii) That any changes to the Street Lighting budget, following recommendations from Task and Finish Group, would be longer term ;
- ix) That the changes to cost centre 1516, Transport Strategy, were due to the merger of this budget with the Transport Operations budget;
- x) That cost centre 1518, Public Transport, related to contracted out public transport services where market pressures dictated tender prices. The contract had been retendered and costs had increased;
- xi) That cost centre 2530, Street Cleaning, included the provision by Cory of a full size sweeper, a pavement sweeper and a team of about 8 staff. The service operates 7 days per week. In addition to street cleaning the service also includes litter bin emptying, litter picking and clearing fly tips. Members were informed that there are 9 years to run on this contract. The alternative would be for the Council to employ staff directly and purchased the equipment; however, tendered services are generally more efficient;
- xii) That the small increase in cost centre 2985, Emergency Planning; was an accounting adjustment for National Insurance contributions at the point of transfer to Leicestershire as the employer. Rutland paid a fixed fee for this

- xiii) That the move to Pool Cars by the Authority had saved in excess of £200k on staff transport costs;
- xiv) That the adjustment of £1,700 for cost centre 2615, Closed Churchyards, related to business rates;
- xv) That the reduction in the Planning Policy budget (cost code 1403) related to changes in resources and the receipt of grant funds for the delivery of neighbourhood plans;
- xvi) That there remained a budget for the Records Office, which Members felt offered a good service;
- xvii) That the adjustment to the Museum Trading Account was to reflect the decrease in stock. Members expressed interest in seeing a more detailed information relating to the profit margin;
- xviii) That the Library Service at HMP Stocken was at no cost as the prison service paid for RCC providing the service;
- xix) That Tourism (cost centre 5846) proposed savings related to the core budget. That going forward this would be funded solely by S106 monies. £83,500 to be carried forward;
- xx) Members were advised that in net terms the Council received £20m from Council Tax and £10m from Government funding; that S106 funding was shown in the MTFP as it impacted on setting the budget as without it the Council would have to look elsewhere for funds; that transfers to/from earmarked reserves were shown in the MTFP to show no impact on Council Tax;
- xxi) That Appendix 3B to Report No. 286/2013 included Income from Government Grants (ring-fenced) and Other Income;
- xxii) That changes to the Revenue budget included the removal of one-off budgets from 2013/14 and reflected decisions made since the last budget setting in relation to virements and supplementary estimates;
- xxiii) It was stated that it would be helpful to have explanations of reversals/transfers;
- xxiv) |To further Localism, negotiations on some contracts would be possible if Parishes wished to take on board some services themselves. Alternatively this could be achieved by varying the service standard and entering into a Service Level Agreement with RCC;
- xxv) That SEN Transport appears in both Places and People Directorates. The People Directorate held the majority of the funding and determined which service should be provided. The Places Directorate delivered these services. The Places Directorate held a small budget which covered some transport services delivered directly by RCC, specifically the staff costs for an escort and fuel costs. The cost centre names would be changed to clarify;
- xxvi) That parking income related to both on street and off street. The Assistant Director – Finance, Mr Della Rocca, confirmed that overall income into Places would net off other costs so supported the overall budget requirements of the Council;
- xxvii) That the reversal of one-off Adjustments 2013/14 for Oakham Enterprise Park was connected to the overall project cost over a number of years;
- xxviii) That larger families could apply for an extra or larger black bin free of charge;
- xxix) That the Places Contracts Register was monitored continuously to identify when contacts will need to be retendered and what the financial impact might be.;

- xxx) That consideration had been given to cost effectiveness regarding SEN Transport with regard to the number of taxi services and the possibility of extending the in-house service;
- xxxi) That officers were requested to consider requesting feedback on the impact of savings on services, in particular library services, in order to inform future service provision.

AGREED:

- i) That Panel noted the contents of Report No. 286/2013.

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The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.10 pm.

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